(c) and (d) Following steps have been taken for attending the complaints expeditiously :-

(i) Computerisation of fault repair system.

(ii) Use of modern testing instruments for localizing and rectifying the faults on telephone cables.

(iii) All efforts are being made to reduce the number of faults which include introduction of ducts, use of jelly filled cables, use of reliable transmission media, upgradation of external plants, etc.

(e) Improvement of maintenance is a continuous process. The improvement are being brought about effectively and systematically.

[English]

Sale of Essential Commodities

1819. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether permission has been given to the Government of Uttar Pradesh for the sale of essential commodities outside the State;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) its impact on the prices on wheat in open market;

(d) whether the above decision has encouraged smuggling of foodgrains on Indo-Nepal border; and

(e) if so, the steps being proposed to stop such smuggling and to stablise wheat prices in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) and (b) No such permission has been given to Government of Uttar Pradesh. However, there are no restrictions on inter-state movement of wheat from Uttar Pradesh. Wheat is a delicenced commodity in U.P. since January, 1995.

(c) The Government of U.P. has reported the following average wholesale Price of wheat :

2.1.1996	-	Rs.451/- per quintal
1.5.1996	-	Rs.403/- per quintal
3.6.1996	-	Rs.423/- per quintal
12.7.1996	-	Rs.480/- per quintal

(d) In view of answer to part (a) & (b) above, question does not arise.

(e) The State Government has taken steps to increase the availability of foodgrains in Public Distribution and Revamped Public Distribution. During June, 1996, the off-take of wheat has gone up to 55% of allocation against average off-take of about 3% during 1995 in the PDS. The off-take under RPDS has also increased to about 85% of allocation in June. The Food Department of Government of U.P. operates 13 check posts to check illegal movement of foodgrains.

Withdrawal of Air Services

1820. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has withdrawn Air services from some routes during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97, so far;

(b) if so, the details of such routes;

(c) whether the Government propose to re-introduce flights in some of these routes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM): (a) to (d) Depending upon commercial viability the air lines introduce new services or withdraw from the existing routes/sectors. However, the flight schedules of operators are approved subject to their fulfilling route dispersal guidelines laid down by the Government.

Unemployed Blinds

1821. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of educated blind unemployed persons in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether the State Governments and the Union Governments do not provide jobs to them as per the reservation quota;

(c) if so, whether the Government are considering a proposal to provide jobs to these educated blind persons according to their qualifications;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) According to the Ministry of Labour DGE & T, the Live Register of the Special Employment Exchanges for the phsycially Handicapped persons does not have a separate category for educated blinds. State-wise number of unemployed blind persons, both educated and uneducated, on such register is enclosed as statement.

(b) Associations/Organisations of the Blind has been making representations that the reservation quota for the blind is not being filled up.

(c) to (e): With the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, statutory provision has been made that every appropriate Government shall appoint in every establishment such percentage of